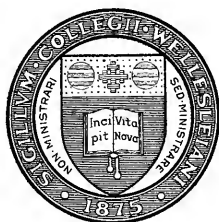


A PITTSBURGH COMPOSER

BY

FLETCHER HODGES

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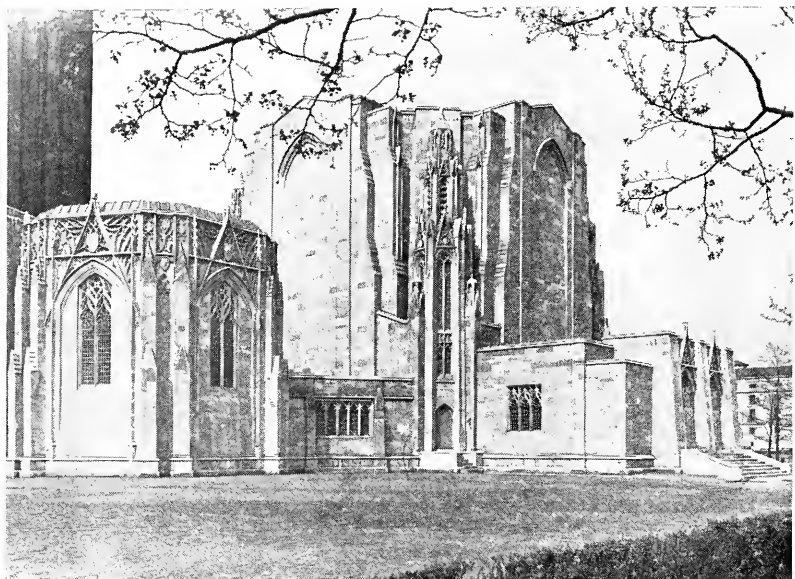
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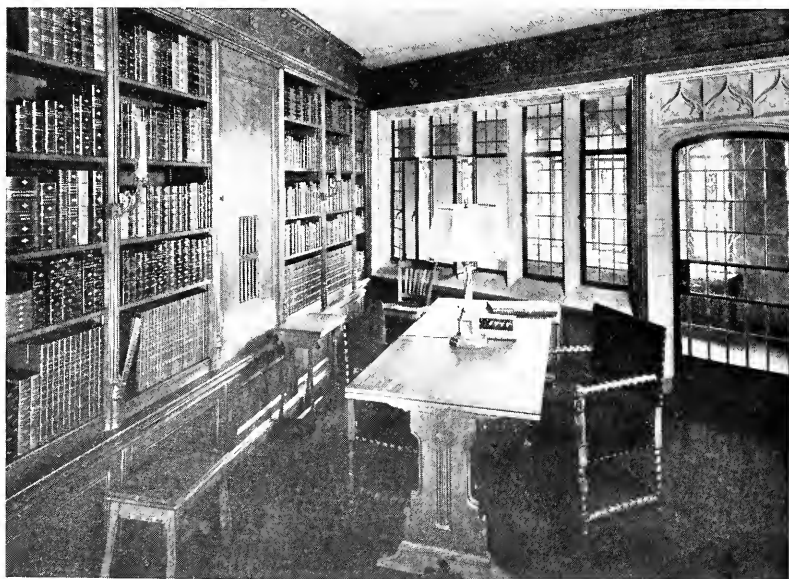
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# A PITTSBURGH COMPOSER AND HIS MEMORIAL

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# THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

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VOLUME 21

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## A PITTSBURGH COMPOSER AND HIS MEMORIAL

FLETCHER HODGES, JR.<sup>1</sup>

A VIRGINIA night, in January, 1864. Gathered around their campfires, wearied with the deadly bitterness of shedding brothers' blood, the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac seek escape in song from the reality of the present and the menace of tomorrow. What are they singing—the latest stirring war songs of those two Chicago composers, George F. Root and Henry C. Work, whose melodies have been so enthusiastically acclaimed by Union men and women who do not know war through personal experience? No; the men of the Army of the Potomac know war far too well to sing about it. They are singing a song of home, a song of the happiness of days gone by and of sorrow to come, a song fraught with despair at the inescapable tragedy of life:

The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home,  
'Tis summer, the darkeys are gay.  
The corn-top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom,  
While the birds make music all the day.  
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,  
All merry, all happy and bright;  
By'n'by Hard Times comes a-knocking at the door,  
Then my old Kentucky home, good night.

<sup>1</sup> The author is curator of the Foster Hall Collection at the University of Pittsburgh.  
Ed.

Hard-bitten veterans of Gettysburg, Indian fighters from Minnesota, and all the mixed assortment of Yankee farmers, Bowery b'hoys, Germans from Cincinnati and St. Louis, and newly arrived Irish immigrants raise their voices in the refrain:

Weep no more, my lady,  
 Oh! weep no more today.  
 We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,  
 For the old Kentucky home, far away.

Then comes a verse that seems like a prophecy of doom for the sons of men:

They hunt no more for the possum and the coon,  
 On the meadow, the hill, and the shore,  
 They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,  
 On the bench by the old cabin door.  
*The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,*  
*With sorrow, where all was delight.*  
*The time has come when the darkeys have to part,*  
*Then my old Kentucky home, good night!*

Now comes another song in the same strain:

Where are the hearts once so happy and so free?  
 The children so dear, that I held upon my knee?  
 Gone to the shore, where my soul has longed to go.  
 I hear their gentle voices calling, "Old Black Joe."  
  
 I'm coming, I'm coming, for my head is bending low,  
 I hear those gentle voices calling, "Old Black Joe."

Overcome by their memories, the Union singers fall silent. The forgotten composer of these songs, through some inexplicable genius, has caught the spirit of a period in our country's history, tender, sentimental—and tragic. For this period has been transformed into an age of hate, when it can truly be written that "in this fearful struggle between North and South, there are hundreds of cases where father is arrayed against son and brother against brother."

A mile away, beyond the picket lines, come faint echoes of music from the campfires of the Confederacy. The Army of Northern Virginia is singing of the Swanee River, that half-legendary stream which has encircled the earth, flowing through the soul of humanity, and becoming the symbol of all mankind's vague, lost, wordless dreams, of

joys that have vanished, of unattainable longings, of homesickness and timesickness:

Way down upon de Swanee Ribber,  
Far, far away,  
Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber,  
Dere's wha de old folks stay.  
All up and down de whole creation,  
Sadly I roam,  
Still longing for de old plantation,  
And for de old folks at home.

All de world am sad and dreary,  
Ebry where I roam,  
Oh! darkeys, how my heart grows weary,  
Far from de old folks at home.

According to Rossiter Johnson's *Campfire and Battlefield*, this song, *Old Folks at Home*, was, next to J. P. Webster's pathetic *Lorena*, nearest to the heart of the Southern soldier.

Unknown to the thousands of fighting men on both sides who sang his songs so freely, the composer of these heart-felt melodies at that time lay dying in Bellevue Hospital, New York City. His fame of earlier years obscured by the tremendous national upheaval, Stephen Collins Foster passed away almost unnoticed by the American people for whom he had sung. Neither he nor his contemporaries realized his national significance; it is only today that we are beginning to allot to Stephen Foster the place which is rightfully his in the history of American civilization.

Stephen Foster of Pittsburgh has been in his grave for almost three quarters of a century, yet a score of his best songs live on. Due to their healthy vitality, they have stood the tests of peace and war and time, and have emerged fresh and strong and ever-young. They have become, not only a part of the American heritage, but of the world's heritage. If music can achieve for itself immortality, then our Pittsburgh composer's simple melodies will be heard for all time, in the noble company of the magnificent compositions of Haydn, Beethoven, the other masters, and a few gems of folk song like *Barbara Allen*, which, although delicate, has survived almost a thousand years of English history.

It is unnecessary and futile to attempt to justify Foster's past popularity or to defend the present high position he occupies in the realm of music. The American people have taken judgment out of the hands of the critics, who have not always judged Foster accurately. Some of his contemporaries, while admitting that his contributions to negro minstrelsy were amusing, or entertaining, or even the best of their kind, labeled them merely interesting songs that caught the popular fancy for the moment and would soon be forgotten. Their composer was advised to devote himself to "higher types" of music. Others considered *Old Folks at Home* and *My Old Kentucky Home* grotesque negro songs, and suggested that the sentimental ballad should be Foster's real field of endeavor. Still others, a few Boston and New York classicists anxious to raise the general level of music appreciation in the United States, frankly dismissed the works of Stephen Foster as cheap, coarse, written in poor taste, even as "melodious trash." And thus having disposed of him, they turned their attention to operas and symphonies. But all this meant little to the general public who continued to sing and love his songs, and to adopt them as their own, even as the Forty-Niners took unto themselves Stephen's hearty *Oh! Susanna*, made it their marching song across the continent to the gold fields of California, and eventually transformed it into that young state's unofficial anthem. For fifty years after Stephen's death, he was with few exceptions forgotten by critic and professional musician alike, even while his melodies were becoming ever more strongly impressed on the national consciousness. The home and the community instinctively recognized qualities in his music which they valued, even though they may not have analyzed them. Yet the name of Stephen Foster was seldom associated with his works. Therefore, from a purely technical viewpoint, his songs might be considered true folk songs. He himself was rapidly becoming a semi-mythical figure, whom the mists of time were obscuring with traditions unbased on facts. He might have been lost, altogether, had not the last quarter century witnessed a marked revival of interest in both the music and the life of the composer.

Foster's fame rests chiefly on his four great songs of the South, *Old Folks at Home*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Massa's in de Cold Ground*,

and *Old Black Joe*. These beloved plantation melodies were intended to portray one race of people, one section of our country, one period in our history, yet through his genius Foster succeeded in creating songs which have leaped the boundaries of space and time, and express universal thoughts and emotions. The best of his sentimental ballads are still sung to-day: his hauntingly beautiful *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair*, his tender *Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming* and *Beautiful Dreamer* recall the charm of an age which is past. *Oh! Susanna* and *Camptown Races* are proof that Foster possessed a sense of humor and occasionally sang in lighter vein. Other songs still heard to-day are *Old Dog Tray*, *Old Uncle Ned*, *Nelly was a Lady*, and *Nelly Bly*. Altogether, he produced more than two hundred original songs and compositions. About twenty of them, his best works, so combine the qualities of poetry, melody, simplicity, and sincerity, that the resulting songs form a remarkable contribution to the music of our nation and of all mankind.

Cincinnati, where Stephen lived from 1846 to 1850, has considerable basis for her claim that the happiest and most formative years of his life were those spent in the Queen City. The research of two Cincinnatians, E. Jay Wohlgemuth and Raymond Walters, president of the University of Cincinnati, has brought to light hitherto unknown facts about his life, and their writings are both valuable and interesting contributions to Foster bibliography.<sup>2</sup> They show Cincinnati as a vigorous, growing young city of the West, populated by New Englanders, Pennsylvanians, Virginians, and Kentuckians, with the traditions of the old South playing an important part in the life of the city. To this mingling of the streams of several American cultures, a strong German element added an Old World flavor, and an interest in the arts, notably music. Cincinnati's levees were washed by the waters of the Ohio River; she was an important shipping point for both passengers and freight. Southern planters, river men, gold-seekers bound for California, negro roustabouts, all formed a colorful and ever-changing panorama of humanity along her water front. She carried on a thriving trade in pork, wheat,

<sup>2</sup> E. Jay Wohlgemuth, *Within Three Chords: the Place of Cincinnati in the Life of Stephen Collins Foster* (Indianapolis, 1928); Raymond Walters, *Stephen Foster: Youth's Golden Gleam. A sketch of his life and background in Cincinnati, 1846-1850* (Princeton University Press, 1936).

and cotton. Life was certain to be interesting and stimulating. In such an environment, both fresh and mellow, Stephen's genius blossomed. It was in Cincinnati that he began to write songs in earnest, and it was there that he decided to abandon a business career, and to become a professional composer.

Cincinnatians have given careful study to Stephen Foster of Pittsburgh, they have appreciated his music, they have done much to honor his memory. They can well take pride in the part their city played in his development.

Pittsburgh, Stephen's native city, should also take pride in her share in the development of her own composer—although no Pittsburgh writers have yet made a serious, thorough study of this subject. Yet it can not be said that he is a prophet without honor in his own city, because the last decade has seen Pittsburgh become a leader in the Foster renaissance.

Stephen was born in what is now the Lawrenceville section of Pittsburgh, on July 4, 1826; his youth was molded by Pittsburgh people and experiences; he lived here the greater part of his maturity; his best work was accomplished here. Whoever seeks to understand Foster should understand the city which bred him.

He was among our first genuinely American composers, in that his songs were American in theme, rather than imitations of the English and German music of his time. There were other composers in America during his youth, it is true, but most of them lived in the older seaboard cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore, where the influence of European-trained teachers was strong. Such men looked across the Atlantic to England and Germany for their inspiration, with the result that they merely composed transplanted English or German music. Not so with Stephen Foster! Born at the meeting place of North and South, East and West, he did not look elsewhere for his inspiration—he found it all about him. And he sang of the America that he knew: the American home, the sentimental emotions underlying the superficial practicality of the American temperament, life on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, slavery, the slumberous plantation life, the red-hot political campaigns, and southern battlefields. Because he generally

knew what he was singing about, and felt it deeply, his best music lives and breathes.

The Pittsburgh that Stephen knew as a boy was less than two generations removed from the frontier. Of pioneers in the western wilderness, like Stephen's grandfather, James Foster, Sir George Otto Trevelyan, the English historian of the American Revolution, wrote: "The Scotch-Irish to the west of the Susquehanna resided, isolated and armed, on farms which they themselves had cleared; and they had no defence against a raid of savages except their own vigilance and courage. A fierce and resolute race, they lived not indeed in the fear, but in the contemplation, of a probability that their families might be butchered, and the fruits of their labour destroyed, in the course of one bloody night."<sup>3</sup>

In his biography of Foster, Stephen's brother, Morrison, has described early Pittsburgh and has named some of its first settlers. The descendants of these men were the friends and neighbors of Stephen and his family. Many of the family names Morrison lists will sound familiar to present-day Pittsburghers:

It must be borne in mind that Pittsburgh, ever since the Revolutionary war, has always been a town of refinement, with a society fit to mingle in the courts of royalty. Before it was safe to live altogether outside of forts, while log dwellings were the homes of the people, while the sound of the pioneer's axe and rifle were familiar every day to the ear, academies and colleges were reared in the midst of the forest. Many officers of the army, with their accomplished families, settled here during and just after the Revolution. Among these were: Col. John Neville, Col. Pressley Neville, Col. William Butler, Col. Richard Butler, Lieut. Col. Stephen Bayard, Major Isaac Craig, Major Ebenezer Denny, Major Edward Butler, Major Alexander Fowler, Major William Anderson, Capt. Abraham Kirkpatrick, Capt. Adamson Tannehill, Capt. Uriah Springer, Capt. George McCully, Capt. Nathaniel Irish, Capt. John Irwin, Capt. Joseph Asheton, Capt. James Gordon Heron, Capt. James O'Hara, afterwards Quartermaster-General; Col. George Morgan, Lieut. Josiah Tannehill, Lieut. William McMillan, Lieut. Gabriel Peterson, James Foster [*the grandfather of Stephen Collins Foster*], Lieut. Ward, Capt. John Wilkins, Surgeon's Mate John Wilkins, Jr., Surgeon's Mate George Stevenson, Surgeon's Mate John McDowell, Quartermaster John Ormsby. These, and others who were civilians, brought with them the courtesy and social amenities of the most refined circles in the East, which, in the Colonial times,

<sup>3</sup> *The American Revolution*, 2: 138 (New York, 1917).

were an improvement upon those of the nobility of England and France. A number of families had their private carriages and liveried servants. When Louis Philip[p]e and his brothers, Beaujolais and Montpensier, visited Pittsburgh they expressed surprise at the ease and elegance of their entertainment by the people.<sup>4</sup>

The young Stephen must have found his native Pittsburgh as fascinating a city as Cincinnati was to be at a later period of his life. Here, too, was the colorful river traffic. Travelers bound for the South and the West passed through in large numbers. The negro population was a picturesque element. Stephen was intensely interested in them and their music. Family accounts tell us of the boy being taken by colored servants in the Foster home to attend negro church services. Foster has stated that the music he heard there affected the composition of his future songs.

Here, then, in the Smoky City, a receptive young boy might find inspiration in the seething activities of the very heart of America. And not only his fellow men, but the surrounding country itself, furnished inspiration. Morrison Foster has recorded that Stephen loved "to ramble among the woods and upon the hills by the three beautiful rivers of his home with his books and pencil, alone and thoughtful. Here the rustling of the leaves, the twitter of birds, the falling twigs and the rippling waters accorded harmoniously, and fell in grateful melody on his sensitive ear."

The Foster family moved often; Stephen lived in many parts of Pittsburgh during his life here. He was born in the Foster family home on Penn Avenue, "The White Cottage." The Fosters occasionally lived in Harmony, Pennsylvania, where they had a summer home. Then they moved to Allegheny, occupying successively a number of houses, eventually one opposite the East Common. In 1857 Stephen with his wife and daughter left Allegheny, and for about four months they lived at the Eagle Hotel, 274 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, of which John Mish was proprietor. Then followed an indefinite number of Pittsburgh landlords. Stephen's account book shows that during this period he was paying rent to William and James Murdock, a Mrs. Johnston (possibly

<sup>4</sup> Morrison Foster, *Biography, Songs and Musical Compositions of Stephen C. Foster*, 6 (Pittsburgh, 1896).



the wife of William Johnston of Johnston's Hotel, East Liberty Station), and Mrs. A. Miller. Thurston's *Directory of Pittsburgh & Vicinity for 1859-'60* contains the entry, "Foster Stephen C, music composer 112 and 114 Smithfield." This seems to have been Stephen's office, rather than a residence.

Stephen's education was consistent with that of the sons of other leading Scotch-Irish families of the community. He was sent, at the age of five, to an "infant school" conducted by a Mrs. Harvey and her daughter, Mrs. Morgan. He later attended the Allegheny Academy, a school founded by the Reverend Joseph Stockton, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny. The academy and its faculty were described by Morrison Foster as follows:

This academy was a model institution for the education of youth, and was attended by the sons of nearly all the most prominent citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny. Mr. Stockton was a perfect tutor. He was learned, he was firm, he was amiable, and he was thorough and practical. His acquirements were numerous and general. In addition to the classics, he was master of the grammar of the English language, and was also a profound mathematician. He published a work on Arithmetic, which was for a long time the standard in all schools west of the Allegheny mountains, and to-day [1896] is unsurpassed by any later work.

Mr. Stockton had with him an assistant who was his equal as a scholar except in knowledge of the classics, Mr. John Kelly, an Irishman, of wonderful accomplishments. He had been a tutor in the family of Sir Rowland Hill, and brought with him letters of introduction from people of the most excellent sort in the refined city of Dublin. Mr. Kelly was a thorough disciplinarian. While he was of genial disposition and out of school played ball and prisoner's base with the boys, and excelled in every manly athletic exercise, in school he required rigid attention to business.

Kelly's students held him in affectionate regard. Over a decade later, Stephen wrote a poem (possibly for a school reunion) that is evidence of their admiration:

#### THE OLD SCHOOLMASTER

Old partner of our youthful mirth,  
Thy fruits are scattered o'er the earth.  
And while they bloom scarce mellowed yet,  
The sun that warmed them soon must set.  
But when the final beam is spent,  
Thou shalt not lack a monument,

A land mark of departed joys,  
A tribute from the Kelly boys.

And when at thy approving nod  
The ball went bounding o'er the sod,  
The wily fugitive was found,  
The wrestler hurled upon the ground,  
I've seen thee help the vanquished stand  
Or take the victor by the hand,  
And smile upon the friendly strife  
That nerved us for the siege of life.<sup>5</sup>

A private tutor, the Reverend Nathan Todd, was then Stephen's teacher until his family decided, in 1840, to send him to Bradford County, Pennsylvania, where his elder brother, William, was employed by the state as chief engineer in the construction of the North Branch Canal. For a year and a half, in 1840 and 1841, Stephen was a student at two Bradford County institutions, the Athens Academy and the Towanda Academy. While attending the former, he composed his first musical work, *The Tioga Waltz*. He was then 14 years of age. In the summer of 1841, he entered Jefferson College at Canonsburg, which later combined with Washington College to form the present Washington and Jefferson College. He stayed only a week. He explained in a letter to William that his return to Pittsburgh was caused by sickness—but he would have been more accurate if he had called it homesickness. At home again, Stephen studied for a while with a Mr. Moody, a teacher of mathematics, and with Captain Jean Herbst, a Belgian who taught him French and German. It is also said that he learned to paint well in water colors, but to date none of his works in this form of art has been discovered.

Stephen was never very happy in school. He could not succeed in adapting himself to discipline and routine. An intense individualist, he wished to study those things which interested him. His chief love was music, but education in western Pennsylvania in the 1830's and 1840's provided little place in the curriculum for a subject, like music, so far removed from a practical, materialistic existence. And the community

<sup>5</sup> The source of this poem is Foster's book of original manuscripts in the Foster Hall Collection at the University of Pittsburgh.

itself, while enjoying music in the home and in the concert hall, felt that music was not an integral part of everyday life. It was not even considered possible that an ambitious young man should plan a musical career. So there was almost no opportunity, in the Pittsburgh of Foster's day, for the serious study of music. Whatever he learned about the science of music was learned principally through his own efforts. According to Foster family accounts, Henry Kleber, a German-born musician who operated a Pittsburgh music store, was Stephen's close friend. He is known to have given Stephen technical advice, and it is said occasionally arranged his compositions.

Some musicians have regretted Stephen's lack of a formal musical education in Pittsburgh. In their opinion, he might have produced great works of art—operas, symphonies, cantatas—had he early been placed in the hands of persons anxious to develop his talent. Here was a potential Schubert, they have claimed, who musically speaking remained a child all his life, and never realized the possibilities within himself. Perhaps they are right. Yet it is the opinion of the writer of this article that there is possibly another viewpoint. (This opinion, it should be noted, is offered as that of a librarian and a curator, not of a musician.)

Stephen Foster was a genius, with an originality, a simplicity, and a gift for pure melody that education could not have improved. These qualities made him great. Would education have stifled the first, destroyed the second, and over-complicated the third? Early training would undoubtedly have given him far greater technical skill, and would have raised the general average of his work. But would the world be better off if Stephen had devoted himself to the composition of mediocre operas and symphonies? The writer does not think that Foster possessed the capabilities for writing such music. And if he had turned his energies in that direction, we might have lost forever such gems as *Old Folks at Home* and *My Old Kentucky Home*, which certainly are the best songs of their type that have yet been composed.

It was in the Pittsburgh music store of Smith & Mellor that Stephen as a boy of seven gave early evidence of his musical precocity. According to brother Morrison, "he accidentally took up a flageolet . . . and in a few minutes he had so mastered its stops and sounds that he played

Hail Columbia in perfect time and accent. He had never before handled either a flageolet or flute."

Stephen was reserved and somewhat shy with strangers. In the last four years of his life, in New York, he is often pictured as an anti-social character, avoiding most persons. But as a youth and young man, in the friendly environment of Pittsburgh, all the evidence shows that he enjoyed a pleasant social life with the young men and women of his own set. With them he was gay and witty and exhibited a sparkling sense of humor.

On May 6, 1845, he wrote a poem describing five of his Pittsburgh friends:

#### THE FIVE "NICE YOUNG MEN"

First, there's Charley the elder, the sunday-school teacher,  
Who laughs with a groan,  
In an unearthly tone,  
Without moving a bone  
Or a feature.

[Charles P. Shiras]

Then Charley the younger, the Illinois *screecher*,  
Who never gets mad,  
But always seems glad  
While others are sad;  
Though his face is so long that it wouldn't look bad  
On a methodist preacher.

[Charles Rahm]

There's Andy, who used to be great on a spree,  
Whose *duds* (as he calls them) all fit to a T:  
But people do tell us  
He's got just as jealous  
Of Latimer as he can be.  
They say that he wishes  
The sharks and the *fishes*  
Would catch him and eat him when he gets out to sea.

[Andrew L. Robinson]

And Bob, that smokes seventeen *tobies* a day,  
He's liberal, however, and gives some away.  
Bob's been to college  
Picking up knowledge  
But now he's got home and I hope he will stay.

[Robert P. McDowell]

We will wind up with Harvey, the *bluffer*, the gay.  
He can play on the fiddle (or thinks he can play).

Harvey's mind  
Is inclined  
To all that's refined,  
With a count'nance so bright  
That it rivals the light

Of the sun that now cheers us in this sweet month of May.<sup>6</sup>

[J. Harvey Davis]

Charles Shiras was a local poet who wrote the verses of *Annie, My Own Love*, which Stephen set to music. He also wrote the libretto of an opera produced in Pittsburgh under the title of *The Invisible Prince*, for which Stephen composed the music. Shiras was editor of an anti-slavery journal, *The Albatross*.

As was the custom of the day, Stephen occasionally dedicated songs and compositions to his friends. This enables us to identify other Pittsburgh intimates. On one title page appears the name of Robert Peebles Nevin, editor and writer, one of the few contemporary critics to estimate Foster as a genius, rather than a mere composer of popular songs. Nevin's son, Ethelbert, was later to win a lasting place for himself in American music. Other Pittsburghers honored by dedications were Henry Kleber, his adviser, and several young women: Susan E. Pentland, daughter of Captain Ephraim Pentland of Allegheny, the girl to whom he dedicated his first published song, *Open Thy Lattice, Love*, in 1844; the Keller sisters, Mary and Rachel, daughters of Samuel and Prudence Keller; Mary M. Dallas, daughter of Judge Trevanian B. Dallas; Julia N. Murray, at one time engaged to his brother Morrison; and Eliza T. Denniston.

On July 22, 1850, Stephen married Jane Denny McDowell, daughter of a Pittsburgh physician, Dr. Andrew N. McDowell, who had attended Charles Dickens when the novelist became ill at the Monongahela House during his visit to Pittsburgh in 1842. Jane outlived Stephen for many years, dying in 1903. She was for a while a telegrapher for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Some time after his death, she was married to Matthew D. Wiley.

The daughter and only child of Stephen and Jane, Marion Scully

<sup>6</sup> Manuscript in the Foster Hall Collection.

Foster, was born in 1851, and died on July 9, 1935, in the Foster Memorial Home, 3600 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, at the age of eighty-four. She was long known as a piano teacher, and occasionally she composed music of her own. Many Pittsburghers have received their first instruction in the art of music from Mrs. Marion Foster Welch.

The Fosters were all ardent Democrats, and Stephen shared their intense interest in political affairs. He wrote several songs for political campaigns, both local and national. In the autumn of 1851, the Democratic candidate for governor of Pennsylvania was William Bigler. His brother, John Bigler, was a candidate for governor of California. Both brothers were successful in their campaigns. For the Pennsylvania campaign, Stephen wrote a set of verses to be sung to the air of his own famous *Camptown Races*, with its joyous chorus:

Gwine to run all night!  
 Gwine to run all day!  
 I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag;  
 Somebody bet on de bay!

In spite of the fact that it treats of dead issues, Stephen's song, even to-day, seems alive and spirited:

#### CAMPAIGN SONG—1851<sup>7</sup>

They say that Johnston's up once more,  
 Hurrah! Hurrah!  
 But things ain't now as they were before,  
 Hurrah for the Bigler boys!  
 Then he run his face in a Taylor shop,  
 Hurrah! Hurrah!  
 But the Taylor's gone and he has no prop.  
 Hurrah for the Bigler boys!

Going to run again?  
 Johnston, you're insane!  
 I'll bet my money on the Bigler boys  
 For the Whigs have had their reign!

In California, I am told,  
 Hurrah! Hurrah!  
 They've made a banner trimmed with gold,  
 Hurrah for the Bigler boys!

<sup>7</sup> A hitherto unpublished song found in Foster's book of original manuscripts. "Hurrah" is accented on the first syllable to rhyme with the "Doo-dah" refrain of *Camptown Races*.

If Bigler here beats Bigler there,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
This golden trophy we shall wear.  
Hurrah for the Bigler boys!

The Constitution is our theme,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
And Union is our cherished dream,  
Hurrah for the Bigler boys!  
If South Carolina makes a fuss,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
Oh, why should *we* be in the muss?  
Hurrah for the Bigler boys!

When soldiers for their country bled,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
And had to beg for their daily bread,  
Hurrah for the Bigler boys!  
They little knew that the Federal clan,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
Would take up *Strome* for their right hand man!  
Hurrah for the Bigler boys!

We've let the Whigs elect an ass,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
But now we'll turn him out to grass,  
Hurrah for the Bigler boys!  
For when the tug of war is over,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
The Democrats will live in the clover.  
Hurrah for the Bigler Boys!

The presidential campaign of 1856 found Stephen and his family with a personal as well as a party motive to inspire them with loyalty to the Democratic standard bearer, James Buchanan of Pennsylvania. Stephen's sister, Ann Eliza, was the wife of the Reverend Edward Y. Buchanan, James's brother.

Morrison and Stephen were prominent in the formation of the Buchanan Glee Club, a Democratic singing society established in Allegheny City on August 6, 1856. Morrison was elected treasurer and Stephen musical director. The minute book of this organization is now a part of the Foster Hall Collection in Pittsburgh. The club had an active part in the intensely exciting campaign that followed. They sang in many sections of Allegheny County, occasionally becoming em-

broiled in the street fighting which resulted from the over-abundance of political enthusiasm. Stephen composed songs for the club to sing, and two of them have been preserved. One describes a Republican parade which took place in Pittsburgh on September 17, 1856. It is to be sung to the air of *Villikins and His Dinah*, an English comic song whose melody is unsurpassed for satirical purposes:

### THE GREAT BABY SHOW

or

### THE ABOLITION SHOW

On the Seventeenth day of September, you know,  
Took place in our city the great baby show;  
They shut up the factories and let out the schools,  
For the Seventeenth day was the day of all fools.

Sing tu ral lal lu ral lal lu ral lal lay,  
Sing tu ral lal lu ral lal lu ral lal lay,  
Sing tu ral lal lu ral lal lu ral lal lay,  
Sing tu ral lal lu ral lal lu ral lal lay.

They made a procession of wagons and boats,  
Of racoons and oxen (they all have their votes),  
Sledge hammers, triangles and carpenter's tools,  
One thousand and eight hundred horses and mules.

They had gemmen ob color to join in their games,  
And jokers and clowns of all ages and names;  
They had pop guns and tin pans and all kinds of toys,  
And a very fine party of women and boys.

They had young men on horse back, so nice and so gay,  
Aged Seventeen years on this Seventeenth day,  
And the ladies all thought they were bold cavaliers,  
These bright looking lads aged seventeen years.

They had grim border-ruffians, I'll bring to your mind,  
And they've plenty more left of the very same kind,  
They drank from a flask and played cards on the way,  
And the children looked on, on this Seventeenth day.

They had Ohio Yankees of Western Reserve  
Who live upon cheese, ginger cakes and preserve,  
Abolition's their doctrine, their rod, and their staff,  
And they'll fight for a sixpence an hour and a half.



Now was it not kind in these good simple clowns  
 To amuse all the children in both of our towns,  
 To shut up their work shops and spend so much money,  
 To black up their faces, get tight, and be funny?

They called it a council of freemen, you know,  
 But I told you before 'twas a great baby show,  
 For when they had met they had nothing to say  
 But "Poor Bleeding Kansas" and "Ten Cents a Day."<sup>8</sup>

Stephen's brother, Morrison, wrote two additional verses, which appear in both the original and the published versions. Morrison was to become, in later years, an important figure in Democratic political circles in western Pennsylvania. There are many Pittsburghers today who well remember him through business or political associations. His verses follow:

Then their ship *Constitution* was hauled through the street,  
 With sixteen small guns she was armed complete.  
 But the brave Ship of State by which Democrats stand  
 Carries thirty one guns with old Buck in command.

In the year '45 when the fire laid us waste  
 Old Buck gave us five hundred dollars in haste.  
 They then took his money and lauded his name  
 But he's now "Ten cent Jimmy," their banners proclaim.

Another of Stephen's songs for the club contains an accurate prophecy of the outcome of the election, although it lacks the vitality of *The Great Baby Show*:

#### THE WHITE HOUSE CHAIR

Let all our hearts for Union be,  
 For the North and South are one;  
 They've worked together manfully,  
 And together they will still work on.

Then come ye men from every State,  
 Our creed is broad and fair;  
 Buchanan is our candidate,  
 And we'll put him in the White House chair.

<sup>8</sup> From Foster's book of original manuscripts. The song was first published, with slight variations from the original, in the *Pittsburgh Morning Post* of September 26, 1856.

We'll have no dark, designing band,  
To rule with secret sway;  
We'll give to all a helping hand,  
And be open as the light of day.

We'll not outlaw the land that holds  
The bones of Washington,  
Where Jackson fought and Marion bled,  
And the battles of the brave were won.

We'll let this motto be our guide  
Whatever fate may come.  
"The Constitution *far and wide*  
And Higher Law *at home*."<sup>9</sup>

Foster's popular airs have been freely adapted by all the major political parties and most of the minor since 1848. The melodies of *Old Folks at Home*, *Old Black Joe*, and *Old Dog Tray* were given new words for the purpose of sending Buchanan to the White House, while the newly-born Republican party made use of *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Camptown Races*, and *Nelly Bly* in a vain effort to bring victory to John C. Fremont, the California Pathfinder. And all campaigns since that day to the present have made use of Foster's music. It will be remembered that his *Oh! Susanna* (with verses unchanged) was the Republican theme song in 1936.

Stephen left Pittsburgh in 1860 and went to New York City, where he spent his four remaining years. It was an unwise move. His was a personality that needed sympathetic, understanding family and friends—without them he was lost. It is futile to speculate on what his life might have been had he remained in Pittsburgh. Perhaps he might have lived to write songs of genuine merit once more. Perhaps he would never again have composed music above the mediocre. But it seems unlikely that he would have experienced the intense loneliness, despair, and final tragedy which proved to be his fate in New York.

So much for Stephen and his personal relations with his native city. What have the people of Pittsburgh done to honor their composer?

<sup>9</sup> From Foster's book of original manuscripts. The song was first published, with the exception of the last verse (which may not have been sung by the club), in the *Pittsburgh Morning Post* of September 29, 1856.

They have erected a statue to him in Highland Park; they have established, through the generosity of James H. Park, the Stephen Foster Memorial Home at 3600 Penn Avenue, the house constructed on the site of "The White Cottage," Stephen's birthplace, which is maintained as a Foster museum by the city and was for many years the residence of Stephen's daughter, Mrs. Marion Foster Welch; they have named a unit in the public school system the Stephen Collins Foster School; and they have constructed the Stephen Collins Foster Memorial on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh. It is appropriate that the city of his birth, in which his best work was accomplished, should dedicate to him one of the world's great memorials to composers.

### THE STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER MEMORIAL

Ten years of conception, planning, financing, and construction are represented in this memorial, which is located on the university's Cathedral of Learning quadrangle, facing Schenley Park. Built in Gothic style, of Indiana limestone, it is designed to harmonize with the soaring idealism of the Cathedral of Learning, which rises above it. The architect was Charles Z. Klauder of Philadelphia.

Mrs. Will Earhart, as president of the Tuesday Musical Club of Pittsburgh, first proposed the idea of a memorial to Foster in 1927. Her associates in the club decided to sponsor the founding of the Stephen Foster Memorial. The energy and devotion of Mrs. Earhart and the Tuesday Musical Club were important factors in the completion of the undertaking. The University of Pittsburgh soon entered into the project. Through the coöperation of Chancellor John G. Bowman, the university offered a site for the memorial on its campus, and agreed to maintain and operate the building after its completion. The half million dollars necessary for construction were raised by the Stephen Foster Memorial Committee under the leadership of Edward T. Whiter, by the University of Pittsburgh, and by the Tuesday Musical Club. Contributions to this fund were received from Pittsburgh citizens, children in the schools, and lovers of Foster's music throughout Pennsylvania and the United States. Ground for the memorial was broken on January 13, 1935 (the seventy-first anniversary of Stephen's death), the

corner stone was laid on June 3, 1935, and the building was formally dedicated on June 2, 1937.

As the visitor enters the building, he finds himself in the spacious foyer. Facing him are the two entrances to the auditorium. Over the entrances are engraved the themes of Stephen Foster's best loved songs, *Old Folks at Home* and *My Old Kentucky Home*. The auditorium, seating seven hundred persons, is used for the concerts, lectures, and dramatic productions presented by the University of Pittsburgh, the Tuesday Musical Club, and other groups: its flamingo red velour curtain and chairs and draperies of the same color form a brilliant contrast to the gray stone walls of the room. In other parts of the building are a large social room, the permanent offices of the Tuesday Musical Club, dressing rooms for musicians, lecturers, and actors, and a kitchen. An entire wing of the memorial is devoted to Stephen Collins Foster: here are located a shrine dedicated to the memory of the composer and the library and office of the Foster Hall Collection, the largest and most complete assemblage of material relating to his life and works.

The shrine is a lofty twelve-sided room, containing a series of stone arches. It is lighted by stained glass windows, depicting the themes of the best known Foster melodies. These windows are the work of Charles Connick, formerly of Pittsburgh, now of Boston. Rich in reds, blues, purples and golds, they give life and color to the shrine, and are one of the chief interests to the visitor. Around the walls of the shrine are displayed facsimiles of the music pages of the first or earliest obtainable edition of every published song, composition, arrangement, and translation by Stephen Foster so far discovered. The shrine is also used for displays of Stephen's manuscripts, letters, and other Fosteriana—it may be considered a museum room, as well as a shrine.

The library room, designed by Gustav Ketterer of Philadelphia, furnishes a quiet study for the research worker. On its shelves is an extensive bibliography, built around the life and the works of Stephen Foster, and his background—the music, art, literature, history, and journalism of middle nineteenth century America. Because of the wide range of the subjects it covers, the library is of value to students of Americana, as well as Fosteriana. The books are encased in hand-tooled morocco slip

cases, which serve the dual purpose of protecting their contents and adding their brilliant colors to the room. On the west wall of the library hangs a portrait of Stephen Foster, painted by the American artist, Thomas Hicks, in 1852, when Stephen was twenty-six years old. It is probably the only portrait of Foster actually painted from life. All other portraits of the composer were evidently copied from photographs. The Hicks portrait was presented to the University of Pittsburgh by the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, to be placed in the Foster Memorial. A phonograph, with recordings of Foster's music, is available in the library for the use of those visitors who wish to hear his songs.

The office provides working quarters for the staff and contains the Foster Hall catalogue, listing detailed information about the material in the collection; the files; and a fire-proof vault for the storage of irreplaceable source material, such as original manuscripts, letters, family records, pictures, and Foster's personal possessions.

It is the hope of the University of Pittsburgh that the Stephen Foster Memorial will be more than a tribute to a composer of a past generation. It should also be a living institution of the present, contributing to the musical, the dramatic, and the intellectual progress of the community. In the first year of the memorial's operation, forty thousand persons have attended programs in the auditorium and social room, and an equal number have visited the shrine or inspected the Foster Hall Collection.

### THE FOSTER HALL COLLECTION

The Foster Hall Collection was founded, not by a Pittsburgher or a musician, but by an Indianapolis manufacturer, Josiah Kirby Lilly. Through his generosity, this collection has been presented to the University of Pittsburgh, to be housed permanently in the Foster Memorial, for view and study by the American people. Much of the present remarkable revival of interest in Foster is due to the activities of Mr. Lilly. Through his collecting he has brought to light hitherto unknown information and acquired materials that might otherwise have been lost. Through his publications he has made important contributions to

Foster bibliography. Through his gifts to libraries, schools, musical organizations, radio stations, and individuals, Foster music and literature have been widely distributed and new interest in the composer has been aroused.

The love of this Indiana citizen for the music of Stephen Foster may be traced back to his youth, in Greencastle, Indiana, when he used to hear the students at Asbury College (now DePauw University) singing Foster's songs. Throughout his life, Mr. Lilly has enjoyed keenly hearing Foster's music sung or played. But it was not until 1930, when he was about to retire from business, that he became actively interested in the collecting of material relating to Foster. Some time that year, he happened to hear played a set of excellent phonographic recordings of Foster's music. It occurred to him that it might be an interesting hobby to collect the early editions of these songs he loved so well. Acting upon the advice of one of his sons, a bibliophile, Mr. Lilly wrote to several dealers in Americana, from whom he acquired a few first and early editions of Foster's songs. And then, on January 5, 1931, occurred an event which caused him to become a serious collector of Fosteriana, and to build up the most important collection in existence. On that day he acquired from a Boston dealer several hundred early editions of Foster music, including nearly one hundred first editions. He realized that he now had the most important collection of the music of America's great melodist that had yet been brought together. Yet it was obvious that it was far from complete. He had less than half the possible first editions. There must be many hundreds—possibly thousands—of early editions. His collection so far possessed no Foster manuscripts, no letters, none of Stephen's personal possessions, no pictures, no bibliography on the subject. The very incompleteness of his work so far was a challenge! He would build up his collection, fill in the vacancies, learn all he could about the man and his music, work carefully and accurately, and make his hobby a distinct contribution to American music and American history. He possessed, in the suburbs of Indianapolis, a small granite building used as a library and music hall. He placed his collection in this building, which was then named Foster Hall. The collection itself soon became known as the Foster Hall Collection.



FOSTER HALL, INDIANAPOLIS, AND JOSIAH KIRBY LILLY,  
FOUNDER OF THE FOSTER HALL COLLECTION





The situation confronting a Foster collector in January, 1931, was one to delight the heart of a person who welcomed the presentation, for his solution, of problems both difficult and interesting. No comprehensive collection of Fosteriana existed. A few individuals, here and there, possessed small collections, but almost without exception these collections consisted only of sheet music. Not many of Stephen's rare and important letters and manuscripts had yet found their way into collections. The music division of the Library of Congress contained a valuable file of many of the first editions of Foster's works; it contained some letters, documents, royalty statements, Foster holographs, and other source material. The library's material could serve as a guide, to enable other collectors to plan their own work, but it was far from complete. In Foster's day copyrights were entered in the federal district courts, rather than in the copyright office of the Library of Congress, as they are to-day; this procedure is responsible for many gaps in the library's present records. There was no up-to-date check list of Foster's works. In 1915 the Library of Congress had issued a check list, but the discovery of new material had rendered it obsolete. There was no accurate knowledge of the exact number of works produced by Stephen Foster in the score of years he devoted to composition. Writers on the subject varied widely in their estimates: some stated as low as one hundred songs and compositions, others generously credited Stephen with a thousand.

Although there was a surprisingly large literature on the subject, a large proportion of it was of no value to the student. The greater part of it—newspaper and magazine articles—was either patently inaccurate or mere repetition of former publications, and therefore was almost worthless. But occasionally the research worker came upon material that was of genuine importance. Morrison Foster's *Biography* contained a brief but interesting account of his brother's life, and included about three quarters of Stephen's songs and compositions, many of which might otherwise have been lost. The biographical section of Morrison's book must be considered a series of biographical anecdotes, rather than a biography. Its importance lies as much in its presentation of the personality of the composer, as in its factual statements. Milligan's Fos-

ter<sup>10</sup> was an excellent pioneer study, keenly appreciative of Foster's place in American music. But it was written with the aid of comparatively little source material, and was now out of date. Through this maze of literature, some of it important, much of it unimportant, the student had to feel his way, separating the accurate from the inaccurate and attempting to see the true Foster behind the legends that were in danger of obscuring the man himself.

Mr. Lilly organized the work of solving his collecting problems in businesslike fashion. Not long after the collection was founded, he realized that his interest would soon pass the stage of a one-man hobby, and that assistance would be necessary. New acquisitions were accumulating, source material was awaiting study, certain problems requiring a technical knowledge of music had arisen. The specialized aid he needed was found in the person of Walter R. Whittlesey, an able research worker and musicologist of Washington, D. C., for thirty-five years a member of the staff of the music division of the Library of Congress. As the collection grew in size, other members were added to the Foster Hall staff, in both Indianapolis and Washington. The work was divided into the classifications of acquiring, research, cataloguing, mounting, and correspondence. At one time, eleven persons were engaged in carrying on the work.

Many others, not directly associated with Foster Hall, assisted in the building up of the collection. Dealers in books and music who had Foster material for sale or exchange, fellow-collectors, and all persons interested in Stephen Foster were invited to communicate with Foster Hall. For their benefit an informal magazine, entitled *Foster Hall Bulletin*, was published and distributed gratuitously. This bulletin contained news of interest to the Foster collector: the discovery of new songs, reprints of Foster letters, the establishment of memorials to the composer. Each issue contained a list of the songs still needed by the Foster Hall Collection, and the prices offered for them. The relatives of Stephen Foster aided in the work. Mrs. Jessie W. Rose of Pittsburgh, granddaughter of the composer, and Mrs. Evelyn Foster Morneweck of De-

<sup>10</sup> Harold V. Milligan, *Stephen Collins Foster, a Biography of America's Folk-Song Composer* (New York, ©1920).

troit, daughter of his brother, Morrison Foster, rendered especially valuable service. Original letters and manuscripts, personal possessions of Foster, and other source material not obtainable elsewhere were added to the collection through their coöperation. Moreover, musicians, librarians, curators, students of Americana, sent information and material. Letters were received from all parts of the United States, from Canada and Great Britain, and material poured in from every quarter and in every form.

The result, after several years of work, is a comprehensive collection of more than ten thousand separate items, carefully catalogued and prepared for preservation and use, including: original manuscripts; facsimiles of manuscripts in other collections; first, early, and modern editions of Foster's music; Foster's own possessions; books relating to the composer in whole or in part; songbooks containing his music; magazine and newspaper articles; pictures and portraits; phonograph records; broadsides; and miscellaneous Fosteriana.

One of the most fascinating of the Foster Hall studies has been the identification of original works of the composer, as distinguished from adaptations of his melodies. The number of *original* published songs and compositions discovered so far is 201. In addition to this number, there are over a hundred arrangements and translations which are not classified as original works. The determination of these figures has been a more complicated process than the mere counting of titles. It was early discovered that many of the songs credited to Foster were not actually original compositions. For example, a revival hymn, under the title of *I Love Him*, has been widely published. Foster was credited as the composer. A brief inspection shows that the air is none other than his *Old Black Joe*. Another hymn, *There's a Land of Bliss*, makes use of his *Old Uncle Ned*. A tribute to George Washington, *Mount Vernon Bells*, proves to be set to the air of Stephen's *Massa's in de Cold Ground*. A temperance songster contains *Then and Now*, to be sung to *My Old Kentucky Home*.

Foster's popular melodies, like other "old favorites," were widely adapted in this manner, both in his own day and afterwards. They are still being adapted to-day. The Foster Hall Collection contains literally

hundreds of such titles, and more are being added constantly. Mr. Lilly has coined the word "Derivata" for adaptations of Foster melodies—a term which has become a standard part of the vocabulary of Foster collectors. The immense number of these adaptations was a source of confusion to the early students of Foster's work. Under the impression that they were counting only *original* works, they would include these titles in check lists of the composer's music. At one time, Foster Hall had credited Foster with over 300 original works. Gradually, through the discovery that this figure included "Derivata," the number was brought down to the present 201.

Such "Derivata" as the four listed above can, of course, be easily discerned by the research worker. The melodies there used were among Foster's most popular, and would be obvious to a person aware of the possibility of adaptations. But many "Derivata" were adaptations of songs not so well known: obscure hymns or sentimental ballads that enjoyed a passing popularity but are forgotten to-day. The staff was not familiar with every air composed by Stephen Foster. Thus, *Golden Dreams and Fairy Castles!* was an adaptation of the Foster hymn, *We'll Still Keep Marching On*. And a Civil War song, *The Wounded Soldier's Welcome Home*, utilized Foster's forgotten *Willie We Have Missed You*.

Foster Hall was a non-commercial institution. No charges of any kind were made for its services or its publications. Its founder did not seek self-advertisement. His only purpose was to revive interest in the music of Stephen Foster. All persons interested in Foster were cordially invited to visit Foster Hall or to correspond with Mr. Lilly. Writers and students seeking source material were especially welcome, and assistance was given to them in the preparation of article, book, or thesis. This liberal policy, for example, contributed to the production in 1934 of a long-needed definitive biography of the composer, John Tasker Howard's *Stephen Foster, America's Troubadour*. This volume, the standard work on the subject, was not published by Mr. Lilly, but he had turned the facilities of his collections, both of materials and of newly-discovered facts of Foster's career, over to Mr. Howard, then already

known as an able music historian through his reference book *Our American Music*.

More than fifteen thousand visitors came to Foster Hall during its six years of existence in Indianapolis, not only from Indiana and the Middle West, but from other sections. At least once a week Foster programs were presented at the hall, consisting of a lecture on the composer, a display of the material in the collection, and Foster music by a quartet.

The publications of Foster Hall have been prepared for many uses. The most important is entitled *Foster Hall Reproductions of the Songs, Compositions and Arrangements by Stephen Collins Foster*. This work is a set of facsimiles of the first (or earliest obtainable) editions of Foster's complete works. Since it serves as an accurate check list, it is a valuable aid to the collector who wishes to know the points determining the first edition of a Foster song. Because of the large number of Foster's works and of the necessity for accurate editing, the checking, engraving, and printing of the *Reproductions* was an undertaking of considerable magnitude, requiring a year and a half to complete. One thousand sets of the *Reproductions* were published and presented by Mr. Lilly to libraries throughout the United States and Great Britain. The fact that the *Reproductions* not only comprise Foster's complete works, but also are facsimiles of the original printings, makes them a unique publication.

Another widely distributed Foster Hall publication was a handsome reprint of the biographical section of Morrison Foster's work, under the title of *My Brother Stephen*. Other books and pamphlets, dealing with Foster's life, have been presented to collectors.

*Songs of Stephen Foster*, edited by Will Earhart and Edward B. Birge, is intended primarily for use in schools. It is a collection of more than forty of Foster's best songs. This work has been widely distributed, and a second edition is now being published by the University of Pittsburgh. Although prepared chiefly for use by children, adults have found this work suitable for their own use.

Mr. Lilly has published a number of arrangements of Foster's music.

An excellent medley of Foster melodies for concert band was prepared by Luis Guzman, of the United States Marine Band. This work has been presented to American high-school and college bands, and to bands throughout Latin America and Europe. Other arrangements for voice or instruments have been printed, or are in the course of publication.

The *Foster Hall Recordings* consist of phonograph records of all Foster's original works. A few sets of these records have been prepared and presented to such institutions as the Library of Congress. Moreover, radio stations have been furnished phonographic recordings of Foster programs, and arrangements especially adapted for broadcasting purposes.

In all his work, Mr. Lilly has attempted to do more than maintain a mere museum of Foster relics. He has sought to keep alive the *music* of Stephen Foster. The Foster Hall publications have not only helped to keep alive the best Foster melodies, they have helped to popularize songs of genuine merit, which were not so well known.

After he had founded his collection, Mr. Lilly seriously considered what should be done with it eventually. About that time, he heard of the Stephen Foster Memorial, planned by the Tuesday Musical Club and the University of Pittsburgh. There, it seemed to him, was the logical destination for his collection. His offer to present the collection to the Pittsburgh memorial was accepted, and in 1937 it was transferred in its entirety from Indianapolis to its new home. The work of Foster Hall, under the auspices of the University of Pittsburgh, is an uninterrupted continuation of its former activities in Indianapolis. Its facilities are available to student or writer, publications are sent out, schools and clubs are assisted in the preparation of Foster programs, the collection is exhibited to visitors, programs are held in the memorial.

Pittsburgh citizens and others can now see, at the Stephen Foster Memorial, the source material which gives the Foster Hall Collection its first place among all collections of Fosteriana. Included are the following:

Book of original manuscripts. More than two hundred pages of first drafts of published songs, unpublished verses, inscriptions, and cartoons, all in Stephen's handwriting. Here one can see the evolution of *Old Folks at Home*.

It was originally given the title, *Way Down Upon de Old Plantation*, and the first line reads, "Way down upon de Pedee ribber." At the suggestion of his brother Morrison, Stephen eventually substituted the name of the Swanee River of Georgia and Florida for the Pedee River of South Carolina.

Foster's account book. Stephen kept no diary, but these financial records furnish a fairly good substitute. The book, written in his hand, contains important information about his earnings. Thus, we learn that *Old Folks at Home* earned him \$1,647.46, *My Old Kentucky Home*, \$1,372.06, and *Massa's in de Cold Ground*, \$906.76.

Original letters. A score of Stephen's rare letters are included in the collection. For some reason, few Foster letters have come to light; of those discovered, the majority are in this collection. Photostats of original Foster letters elsewhere—the Library of Congress, the Huntington Library at San Marino, California—are in the Foster Hall Collection, so that complete information is on record.

Publisher's manuscripts. Although first drafts of Foster's songs appear in large numbers in the book of original manuscripts described above, the finished manuscripts, showing both verses and music, as sent to the publisher, are quite rare. Only six are in the collection.

First editions. More than 180 first editions are in the Foster Hall Collection, including the very rare *Oh! Susanna*, the song that established Stephen's fame. A copy of this valuable first edition has just been acquired by the Hall, June, 1938. Foster collectors have been searching for it for years. A perfect copy of *Open Thy Lattice, Love*, his first published work, has not yet been added to the collection, although two mutilated copies are in the collection.

Stephen's melodeon. This portable musical instrument was played by the composer on serenading parties in Pittsburgh in the 1850's.

Stephen's flute, presented by him to his friend William Hamilton of Pittsburgh in 1857. When the corner stone of the memorial was laid in June, 1935, Hamilton's grandson, Alfred R. Hamilton, Jr., presented this flute to the University of Pittsburgh, to be placed in the Foster Memorial.

Minutes of the Buchanan Glee Club, the Democratic organization of which Stephen was music director.

Stephen's Bible, prayer book, and dictionary.

Original pictures of Stephen Foster. There seem to be only four poses so far discovered, all of which are now in the collection:

Daguerreotype of Stephen as a boy.

Daguerreotype taken in Pittsburgh, June 12, 1859. It shows Stephen at the age of thirty-two years and eleven months. This portrait, with Stephen's elbow resting on a table, and his chin resting on the back of his hand, is the pose most familiar to Foster students.

Tintype. Age uncertain.

Ambrotype taken in New York in late December, 1863, or early in January, 1864. This picture was made about two weeks before Stephen's death.

Foster family records, scrapbooks, account books, and other documents containing source material.

Stephen's pocketbook. This Foster relic is at the same time one of the most interesting and the most pathetic items in the Foster Hall Collection. It was found in his clothing after his tragic death in Bellevue Hospital, New York, January 13, 1864. The thirty-eight cents in coins and paper money it contained are eloquent evidence of his financial condition in his last unhappy days.

The pocketbook also includes a scrap of paper bearing five penciled words, which were probably to be used as the title or theme of a song Foster did not live to write. Whatever their purpose, they describe fittingly the fine, sincere character of the man who wrote them, the composer whose melodies have become the heart songs of the American people. These five words are affectionately known to Foster students and collectors as Stephen Foster's Last Message:

"Dear Friends and Gentle Hearts"





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A Pittsburgh composer and  
his memorial

